

UP & COMING ENTREPRENEUR

Sportime Schenectady General Manager - Charlie Ellis

Success Magazine: Charlie, what does success mean to you?

Charlie Ellis: I measure success in terms of how you truly feel inside about who you are and what you do for a living. It's also the process of getting to where you want to be. It isn't whether or not you win the championship, but the distance that you've come that is important

SM: What makes Sportime unique in this industry?

CE: Our product definitely has a niche. We are a comprehensive fitness and racquet club, catering to families and individuals looking for a unique and immaculate experience. From business professionals to teenage athletes, we market to a broad spectrum of people. This is not a place for body builders—we are not a gym! All of our fitness equipment is brand new, the space is never over crowded, and we take pride in trying our best to cater to the specific demographic of the hour, by playing appropriate music, etc

SM: How large is your facility?

CE: We are the fourteenth acquisition in the Sportime franchise, all other branches being located on Long Island. We currently have a membership of over 1,500 people, and are situated on over twenty acres. It is a huge facility and we have hopes of only getting larger.

SM: What type of programs do you offer?

CE: We offer a smorgasbord of programs in a wide variety of areas including our outdoor heated pool, outdoor soccer field, outdoor basketball court, and tennis courts. We have a full-time phys-ed teacher who leads basic introduction to fitness classes including motor skills; various sport skills including soccer, hockey and tennis; and movement skills for kids. In all of our programs we try to promote three basic skill sets—listening, movement, and etiquette. We also have the most comprehensive tennis programs in Upstate New York for players ranging from ages 3-65

years of age. We have the pee-pee tennis program for ages 3-6, the junior development program for ages 7-18, the elite programs for the best high school kids in the region, and the only adult beginner league in the Albany, Schenectady region. We have an absolutely amazing tennis director, Philippe Ceas. I have worked in well over 100 fitness clubs and have hired over 400 tennis pros in my lifetime, and I can honestly say that Philippe is the best by far. He truly is a class act.



SM: How many tennis courts do you have?

CE: We have eight indoor plexi-cushion tennis courts, eight outdoor tennis clay courts, and two indoor racquetball courts. The outdoor clay courts, open six months of the year, are wonderful to play on—they are extraordinarily easy on the joints, and are in pristine condition.

SM: What fitness classes do you offer?

CE: We offer everything from yoga to spinning. We have a total of twenty-four fitness classes a week, with the finest instructors in the community.

SM: What are your hours?

CE: We are open Monday through Friday from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m. and Saturday and Sunday from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m.

“ I want to bring people together and bring the customer service mentality to the fitness industry. ”

SM: What has been the most challenging aspect of your initial start-up phase?

CE: I would have to say that the most difficult part would be trying to make our employees, clients, and the public in general share my exact vision for the product. Because it is a different concept for the area, it is important and challenging to get my thoughts across. I have big goals and aspirations for this place. We already do a lot for the community, and I hope to do more. I want to bring people together, and bring the customer service mentality to the fitness industry.

SM: What is your hope for the future of Sportime in Schenectady?

CE: My dream is to build on the twenty acres that are available. I am in the process of creating a dream team to make something truly unique.

SM: What else would you like people to know about Sportime?

CE: Our goals really are multi-dimensional. We are passionately striving to enhance your life. This is about the big picture—fostering lifestyle, community, and friendships.



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